Ruby Velez

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EDUCATION

University of Chicago — Chicago, IL

B.A. in *Human Rights* and *Law, Letters, & Society* | M.A. in *International Relations* | GPA: 3.8/4.0 — Expected June 2026

Honors: Stamps Foundation Scholar, AP Scholar with Distinction (awarded twice), National Hispanic Scholar

EXPERIENCE

Pozen Center for Human Rights & Corporate Accountability Lab — Chicago, IL and Bogotá, Colombia

Research Assistant, Human Rights and Business in South Africa and Colombia — September 2025 – Present

- Facilitated conference support in Bogotá for strategic litigation skillshare between Colombian and South African lawyers
- Collaboratively developed research agenda on procedural and substantive questions on issues of Multinational Corporation resource extraction and indigenous land rights, and researched applicability of class action mechanisms in Colombia

Ya'Axche Conservation Trust — Punta Gorda, Belize

Strategic Communications Intern — June 2025 – September 2025

- Developed 3-year communications strategy and brand guide based on industry research to improve stakeholder engagement
- Interfaced with indigenous participants in UN FAO program for sapling deliveries to underresourced farmers in rural areas

Latino Policy Forum — Chicago, IL

Civic Engagement Intern — December 2024 – June 2025

- Tracked state-level immigration legislation, provided support at 400-person conference 'Latino Unity Day' at IL State Capitol
- Wrote research memos on impacts of cuts to Headstart, SNAP, and Medicaid and published letter in the Chicago Sun-Times

Aids Foundation of Chicago: Center for Housing and Health — Chicago, IL

Learning and Talent Development Contractor — January 2025 – May 2025

- Researched impacts of redlining, incarceration trends, and gender- and sexuality-based violence on homelessness in Chicago
- Designed a training on homelessness history and best practices, situated within the onboarding process for all new employees

U.S. House of Representatives: New Democrat Coalition — Washington, D.C.

Policy Intern — June – August 2024

- Provided logistical meeting support to Representatives and recorded memos on stakeholder requests and taskforce agendas
- Researched active legislation to highlight opportunities for collaboration between member offices

African Advocacy Network — San Francisco, CA

Legal Aid Intern — June – August 2023

- Prepared filings for immigration court, including researching and writing reports of country conditions
- Led interviews for five clients for the completion of governmental forms in immigration cases

Bronzeville Youth Identity Collaborative — Chicago, IL

Mentor — January – May 2023

- Discussed the reclamation of narrative with 15 South side Chicago highschool students and provided academic mentorship

LEADERSHIP & ACTIVITIES

Future Justice Lawyers of Chicago — Chicago, IL

Program Participant — January 2026 – Present

University of Chicago Journal of Foreign Policy — Chicago, IL

Editor — September 2023 – Present

- Screened prospective writers and edited articles on contemporary international issues for print and digital, released biannually

University of Chicago Harm Reduction Project — Chicago, IL

Advocacy Director | President — April 2023 – Present

- Helped organize distribution of 13,000+ doses of Narcan at food pantries and homeless encampments in Chicago
- Researched Narcan accessibility in Illinois and organized student lobbying at the IL Capitol with IL Harm Reduction Coalition
- Co-founded housing aid program The Appalseed Initiative, fundraised over $30,000 to provide security deposit grants, and helped 42 homeless individuals in Berea, Kentucky transition into stable housing by grant provision and case management
- Joined Jail Solidarity Network to research rising overdoses in Cook County Jail through FOIA requests and inmate testimony

Grassroots Organizing — Tucson, AZ

Volunteer — September 2019 – June 2022

- Prepared immigration case files at pro-bono clinic Keep Tucson Together to support local undocumented individuals
- Interfaced with city officials and distributed supplies to houseless individuals with Tucson Community Cares

SKILLS

Technical: WestLaw, Clio, USCIS System, Case Management, Policy Research, Microsoft Suite, Adobe Photoshop